SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I said, "Yes". ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has already agreed. वे उससे सहमत हैं। ...*(Interruptions)*... Question No. 122.

श्री विनय कटियार: इस खरीद के लिए विभाग विरोध कर रहा था, फिर भी खरीद की गई। ....**(व्यवधान)**...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. *(Interruptions)*... Please proceed. *(Interruptions)*... Will the hon. Member kindly allow the Question Hour to proceed? *(Interruptions)*... Please. Question No. 122.

पश्चिमी बंगाल में राशन के वितरण में अनियमितताएं

*122. **श्री श्रीगोपाल व्यास:††**
श्री बलवंत उर्फ बाल आपटे:

क्या उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि पश्चिमी बंगाल में राशन के वितरण में व्याप्त अनियमितताओं की ओर केन्द्रीय सरकार का ध्यान आकर्षित किया गया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसे रोकने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए गए हैं; और

(ग) यदि कोई कदम नहीं उठाए गए हैं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री (श्री शरद पवार): (क) से (ग) एक विवरण सभा पटल पर रखा जा रहा है।

विवरण

(क) से (ग) जी, हां पश्चिम बंगाल में लक्षित सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अधीन राशन की वस्तुओं के वितरण में अनियमितताओं का उल्लेख करते हुए कई मीडिया रिपोर्टें प्राप्त हुई हैं। ये रिपोर्टें इनकी जांच करवाने, आवश्यक कार्रवाई करने और की गई कार्रवाई की रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करने के लिए राज्य सरकार को भेजी गई हैं। राज्य सरकार से दो रिपोर्टें प्राप्त हुई हैं। राज्य सरकार ने अनियमितताओं के लिए जिम्मेदार खाद्य एवं आपूर्ति विभाग, पश्चिम बंगाल सरकार के कुछ कर्मचारियों सहित संबंधित व्यक्तियों के खिलाफ उचित कार्रवाई शुरू किए जाने की सुचना दी है।

इस मुद्दे को राज्य में लक्षित सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के कार्यकरण को सुप्रवाही बनाने के लिए सभी आवश्यक कार्रवाई करने हेतु राज्य सरकार के साथ उठाया गया है। राज्य सरकार ने अपेक्षित कार्रवाई करने का आश्वासन दिया है।

Irregularities in distribution of ration in West Bengal

†*122. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:††
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the attention of Central Government has been drawn towards the irregularities in the distribution of ration in West Bengal;

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†† सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री श्रीगोपाल व्यास द्वारा पूछा गया।

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

†† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Shreegopal Vyas.

(b) if so, the steps taken to check the same; and

(c) if no steps have been taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A number of media reports have been received mentioning irregularities in the distribution of ration commodities under TPDS in West Bengal. These reports have been sent to the State Government for getting inquiries conducted into them, taking necessary action and submitting reports on Action taken. Two reports have been received from the State Government. The State Government has reported initation of suitable action against concerned persons, including some staff of the Department of Food and Supplies, Government of West Bengal responsible for the irregularities.

This issue has been taken up with the State Government for taking all necessary action to streamline functioning of TPDS in the State. The State Government has assured to take required action.

SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir . I am happy that from the reply of the Government it is clear that the West Bengal Government has finally admitted that there is irregularity at their end.

Is it correct that a Central Minister from West Bengal sought the intervention of the hon. Agriculture Minister after violent trouble erupted in several districts of West Bengal?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, in fact, I want to request the hon. Chief Minister of the State that we should allot more for that particular State. Similar requests also came from one of my colleagues and additional allocation was made for festival purpose.

SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: My second supplementary is this. Has the attention of the Government been drawn to the report that All India General Secretary of Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation, who is leading the agitation against the West Bengal Government, has claimed patronage to two hon. CMP leaders of this House. They are not present now. Will the Government ensure that action is taken against him, notwithstanding the patronage that he enjoys?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, in fact, we have seen some Press reports including what the hon. Member has mentioned. We have sent every report to the State Government for inquiry and we are expecting a final reply from them. We got some replies on some of the issues where the Government of West Bengal has accepted that there are certain small mistakes and small irregularities, and they are taking corrective action. But the main demand of the State Government was that we should allot more for Above Poverty Line category. The Government of India has taken the entire responsbility for the AAY and Below Poverty Line Category. But, as for the APL category, it depends on the availability of stocks.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Bal Apte. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Sir, he has not answered my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Apte, please proceed.

SHRI BALAVANT ALIAS BAL APTE: Sir, is it a fact that the Centre has, in fact, given supply of wheat and rice, but the West Bengal Government has faled to lift them and, therefore,

there was scarcity and that scarcity has further enhanced because the cadres of the CPM, who are actually the dealers, did not distribute them?

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Please authenticate it. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: It is there on record that the CPM cadres are distributors. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please *(Interruptions)*... Kindly allow the Question Hour to proceed. *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE : The Government is run by cadres. *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the please allow the Minister to answer the question?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, whatever complaint was received, we have referred to the State Government. The State Government has replied to some of the cases and communicated that they would like to take corrective action in regard to these cases. They have not mentioned anything regarding 'a' belongs to this cadre and 'b' belongs to that cadre. This type of information is not there with the Government. But the second important question was asked about what was the allocation and actually how much was lifted. Sir, I have got the figures, for instance, from April, 2007 to September, 2007. The total allocation of rice to West Bengal was 6,52,788 tonnes and the off take was 5,33,377 tonnes.

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Not lifted!

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: In the case of rice, yes, there is a gap of 1,20,000 tonnes, *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Therefore, there is scarcity.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: The total allocation of wheat was 4,34,844 tonnes and the actual off take was 4,02,000 tonnes. In the case of rice, there is a gap and we have communicated it to the State Government. Now we have stopped that.

सभापति जी, यह सवाल बंगाल के पीडीएस के बारे में है। मैं इसी संदर्भ के साथ जोड़कर के एक निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि भारत सरकार, भारत देश के गरीब लोगों को सबसे बड़ी सबसिडी देती है और मुझे याद है कि इसमें लगभग 22 हजार करोड़ रुपये का अनाज गरीबों को वितरण होता है । मैं सोचता हूं कि गरीबों की खातिर इससे बड़ी कोई स्कीम, कोई योजना नहीं है। मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि पीडीएस पर खाद्य मंत्रियों की मीटिंग नहीं, बल्कि मुख्य मंत्रियों की मीटिंग हो और उस मीटिंग को आप प्रधान मंत्री से बात करके बुलाने का काम करें। इसके लिए कोई मैकेनिज्म होना चाहिए, क्योंकि भारत सरकार इतनी बड़ी सबसिडी राज्य सरकारों को देती है। पीडीएस की जो स्कीम है वह पूरी तरह से डिसरप्ट हो गयी है, लूट मची है और आप इतना पैसा गरीबों के लिए खर्च कर रहे हैं, यह पार्लियामेंट उनके लिए इतना पैसा देती है, यह जिम्मेदारी आपकी है कि पीडीएस के तहत अनाज गरीबों तक पहुंचना चाहिए।

सभापति जी, पीडीएस के माध्यम से अनाज गरीबों तक नहीं पहुंच रहा है और जितना समय बीत रहा है, उतना ही यह अनाज डायवरसीफाइड हो रहा है। इसमें सब तरह से लूट मची है। मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से कहूंगा कि यह बहुत गंभीर मामला है। ऐसा बंगाल में हुआ है और ऐसा सारे देश में हो रहा है, विशेषतौर पर उत्तर भारत में तो कोई इसकी जिम्मेदारी ठीक से नहीं लेता है, इसलिए पीडीएस स्कीम साउथ में थोड़ी-बहुत ठीक है। आप इस पर पहल करके मुख्य मंत्रियों की बैठक बुलायें और एक कारगार मैकेनिज्म बनाये, जब यह गरीबों के लिए दिया जा रहा है, जो अनाज के बदले में पैसा सीधे उसके हाथ में दीजिए। भारत सरकार का जो सारा पैसा लूट के लिए जा रहा है, आप इसको रोकने का काम करिये। क्या आप इसके लिए मीटिंग बुलाकर के इंतजाम करेंगे या नहीं करेंगे, यह मैं आप से जानना चाहता हूं?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, I have to make one thing very clear. Actually, the Government does not give money to the State. The Government makes allocation for foodgrains which are subsidised foodgrains. The hon. Member is right that the subsidy come to Rs. 23,000 to Rs.24,000 crores. There are no two opinions about it. And, as I said already to the House, after we got a report about this diversion, a number of actions have been taken and, definitely, there is an improvement. Still there are States where the Public Distribution System is not effectively implemented, and that is the reasons why meeting were called on the question of food security; the Food Ministers' meeting were also called. The hon. Member has suggested that we should request the hon. Prime Minister to call a meeting of the Chief Ministers. I have no objection to it. It is a very impportant subject. Substantial money has been provided for the sake of poor sections of the society. So, in order to ensure effective implementation of the scheme, I would request the hon. Prime Minister to call a meeting and discuss and bring it to the notice of all the Chief Ministers.

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Sir, our Government is very much committed to strengthening the Public Distribution System for both the APL and BPL categories. But, so far as our information goes, there is a huge difference between the quantum of foodgrains requisitioned by the Government *vis-a-vis* the allocations made to the States. Now, I could not hear exactly the hon. Minister. So far as my information goes, as far as rice is concerned, 2.29 lakh tonnes till April was the quantum of allotment. Then, from May, it was reduced to 7700 tonnes. As far as wheat is concerned, the figure is 2.93 lakh tonnes. Then, in May, 2006, it was reduced to 9102 tonnes; and, it was further reduced to 59,040 tonnes from June, 2007. So, when it was 2.93 lakh tonnes up to April, subsequently, it got reduced. So, my supplementary to the hon. Minister is whether we are committed towards strengthening the Public Distribution System. Considering the quantum of foodgrains requisitioned by the Government of India *vis-a-vis* the actual allotment during the last six months, how would the Government of India actually fulfill the total requirement of the States so that the Public Distribution System is strengthened?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As I have already explained to the hon. House regarding actual allotment and actual off-take, now, the information has been sought about the APL and the BPL categories. As for these categories, we have not changed the quantum, that is, whatever has been allotted for a number of years, and we are maintaining that. Of course, the figure mentioned by the hon. Member is correct. But I will be happy to give the figures of allocation of rice for APL categories and the actual off-take. In the month of April, 2007, the allocation was 7700 tonnes and the actual off-take was 5,662 tonnes. In May, 7700 tonnes were allocated and the actual lifting was 14,753 tonnes. In June, 7700 tonnes were allocated, and the off-take was 6,638 tonnes. In July, the allocation was 7700 tonnes and 13,477 tonnes were lifted...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, we are not supposed to interrupt the hon. Minister. But there seems to be something wrong with the figures. He says, "allocation was 7700 tonnes and the off-take was 13,477 tonnes."

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: This is the case in respect of two years when because of festivals adequate quantity was given. But if you see the allocation and the actual off-take, practically, except two years, the off-take was less than the allocation in respect of APL categories. That is the factual position.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the State Government itself has admitted that the Public Distribution System was not properly handled. I would like to know from the

hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the ration card holders in the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, Murshidabad have agitated against the fair price shop owners that they were not being properly given the ration items even though they have showed their ration cards in the ration shops. On the one side, you have been saying that sufficient quantity was given. On the other, they have not lifted it. The ration shop owners, against whom there is an agitation going on in West Bengal, recently, according to the information which we have gathered, are smuggling some of the rice and wheat to Bangladesh. These are the reports. Now, who is doing it and how is it being done? It is happening because there is a price differential involved. When it goes to Bangladesh, it is double the price here. Therefore, the traders are thriving. Sir, I have my own experience. In my State also, we called those people. The hon. Minister of State for Railways is there. Without knowing who the owner is, they are booking consignments. This is also one of the lacunae. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to put an end to all this. Now, you supply whatever quantity of ration they require. If it is not distributed, how are you going to fix the responsibility on the State Government? That is a very important point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question please.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, I am putting my question. Calling the Chief Minister, holding a meeting, calling the Food Minister and holding a meeting, calling the Food Secretary and holding a meeting is not going to solve the problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question please.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, the point is that the Government of India, the Food Ministry has to monitor whether the States are distributing the ration properly to the people or not. I would like to know this from the hon. Minister.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Well, when we brought it to the notice of the West Bengal Government, the West Bengal Government in a communication to my Ministry, on 9th October, 2007 accepted that at the place which was mentioned here by the hon. Member, that is, Bankura, some ration shops were ransacked by certain sections of the society. As per their report and as per our information, there is no complaint about AAY and BPL category in West Bengal. The main complaint is from the APL category. It is true that allocation of the APL category has been reduced throughout India and now, in the open market price and APL market, there is a vast difference and that is why there is more demand; some of the APL category ration shops of the State Government are not in a position to implement it. That is why there was a reaction and that reaction was reflected on ration shops. So, that is a factual position which we have got. But, simultaneously, as per State Government reports, in some of the shops, there is a diversion; there is no proper record; there are certain malpractices and the State Government has taken corrective action. They have communicated to us that action has been taken. Some legal action has also been taken against these people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 123.

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: Sir, I come from West Bengal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please.

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: It is not fair, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Allocation of questions is not on the basis of States. The Hon. Member is requested to...

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: The situation is very alarming, Sir. They are playing with fire.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question please.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: Question please. *(Interruptions)* I would like to inform the hon. Member ...*(Interruptions)*

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MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not a valid reason for disrupting the proceedings. Please proceed with the question *(Interruptions)* being done? It is happening because there is a price differential involved. When it goes to Bangladesh, it is double the price here. Therefore, the traders are thriving. Sir, I have my own experience. In my State also, we called those people. The hon. Minister of State for Railways is there. Without knowing who the owner is, they are booking consignments. This is also one of the lacunae. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to put an end to all this. Now, you supply whatever quantity of ration they require. If it is not distributed, how are you going to fix the responsibility on the State Government? That is a very important point.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not a valid reason for disrupting the proceedings. Please proceed with the question *(Interruptions)*

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: Sir, you must give me a chance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The basis on which you are asking for the floor is not admissible ....*(Interruptions)*. The hon. Member will please. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: I will be very brief, Sir. You have given a chance to him. I must get a chance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The allocation of question is neither on the State basis nor on the party basis.

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI: Sir, I have been raising my hand. It is very unfair. *(Interruptions)* It is a serious question. *(Interruptions)*

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: पी॰डी॰एस॰ के अंतर्गत उनको जाता है ..(व्यवधान)... भारत सरकार की ओर से उनको पैसा जाता है ...(व्यवधान)... उसका दुरुपयोग हो रहा है ..(व्यवधान)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Pani sahib, please. Could you please allow Question Hour to proceed? *(Interruptions)* Please. *(Interruptions)* Pani sahib, please. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*... None of this will go on record. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please proceed with the Question Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*... Question No. 123.

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI:*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow the Question Hour to proceed. ...*(Interruptions)*... Yes, please put the supplementary. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI:* Sir, I walkout under protest.

MR. CHAIRMAN: None of this will go on record. Please do not make a speech here. You are disrupting the Question Hour.

(*At this stage, the hon. Member left the Chamber.*)

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* Not recorded.